

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LA PAZ 00087 01 OF 02 051411Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----051429Z 079185 /42

R 051350Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3657
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 LA PAZ 0087

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PE, CH, BL
SUBJ: PERUVIAN INTENTIONS TOWARD CHILE AND ECUADOR

REF: 76 STATE 314123

1. SUMMARY: BOLIVIANS CONTINUE TO BE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT WAR BETWEEN PERU AND CHILE BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IT WOULD INVOLVE INTRUSIONS INTO OR OVER THEIR TERRITORY WHICH THEY COULD NOT DEFEND AGAINST. IF THE US WERE ABLE TO TAKE CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION, AT LEAST GETTING THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAS INVOLVED IN A PEACE-KEEPING MISSION, WE COULD CONTRIBUTE TO DAMPENING TENSIONS, INCLUDING REDUCING PRESSURES IN BOLIVIA TO SPEND RESOURCES ON MILITARY MATERIEL, PROBABLY FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES. I ALSO SUGGEST THAT WE RECONSIDER PRIVATE TALKS WITH THE GOP ABOUT THE PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

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2. I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OFFER SOME REACTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM LA PAZ ON THE LONGER-TERM STRATEGY TO DEAL WITH THE POTENTIAL ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN PERU AND CHILE AND ECUADOR. I DID NOT OFFER COMMENTS BEFORE BECAUSE WE HAVE REPORTED FREQUENTLY ABOUT BOLIVIA'S APPREHENSIONS OF A POSSIBLE CONFLICT BETWEEN PERU AND CHILE WHICH, IN THE BOLIVIAN VIEW, WOULD INVOLVE INTRUSIONS IN-

TO ITS AIR SPACE AND EXCURSIONS THROUGH ITS TERRITORY. THE BOLIVIAN MILITARY KNOWS THAT IT CANNOT PREVENT SUCH VIOLATIONS OF ITS SOVEREIGNTY. IN ADDITION, BOLIVIA FEARS THAT A CONFLICT WOULD INTERRUPT RAIL AND ROAD TRANSPORTATION FROM CHILEAN AND PERUVIAN PORTS WHICH SERVE LA PAZ. ALSO, I REPORTED IN THE PAST THAT PRESIDENT BANZER, CONCERNED BY THE POTENTIAL ADVERSE IMPACT ON BOLIVIA OF AN ARMED CONFLICT, AND KNOWING THE WEAKNESS OF BOLIVIAN MILITARY CAPABILITY, HAD ASKED WHETHER THE US, EITHER UNILATERALLY OR WITH OTHER MAJOR POWERS IN THE HEMISPHERE, WOULD BE PREPARED TO GUARANTEE BOLIVIAN NEUTRALITY. OUR RESPONSE ON THIS HAS BEEN TO OFFER US RELIANCE ON THE RIO TREATY. NOW, OF COURSE, THE CONFIRMED PERUVIAN PURCHASE OF SOVIET AIRCRAFT HAS HEIGHTENED BOLIVIAN FEARS AND HAS PLACED CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON PRESIDENT BANZER TO MODIFY HIS POSITION OF RESTRAINT ON MILITARY PURCHASES AND HIS POLICY OF USING NEW CREDITS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. BOLIVIA HAS PUT FORTH A NEW CALL FOR PERU AND CHILE TO NEGOTIATE AN ACCESS TO THE SEA WHICH INVOLVES CHILE'S DROPPING TERRITORIAL EXCHANGE AND PERU'S ELIMINATING ITS DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN CONTROL OF AN AREA IN NORTHERN CHILE. IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKDROP THAT I MAKE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS.

3. THE PROBLEMS THAT WE ARE WATCHING ARE REGIONAL AND, ACCORDINGLY, SHOULD BE TREATED IN A REGIONAL OR SUBREGIONAL WAY BY THE US. WE SHOULD BREAK THE TRADITIONAL PATTERN OF CONSIDERING MATTERS AS FMS CREDITS, ARMS SALES, MILITARY VISITORS, AND SUCH, ON A BI-LATERAL BASIS. I BELIEVE THAT THE PROBLEM REQUIRES US AT LEAST TO STIMULATE AN INITIATIVE ON THE PART OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAS. I VISUALIZE THE SECRETARY GENERAL UNDERTAKING AN ACTIVE
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ROLE PERSONALLY, INVESTIGATING THE CAUSES OF INCREASED WAR FEARS AND ALSO SEEKING INFORMATION ABOUT TROOP MOVEMENTS. IN PURSUANCE OF HIS ROLE AS PEACEKEEPER, I CAN VISUALIZE THE SECRETARY GENERAL VISITING EACH COUNTRY INVOLVED TO DEMONSTRATE THE INSTITUTION'S CONCERN ABOUT POTENTIAL AGGRESSION AND TO OFFER REASSURANCES TO THOSE WEAKER MEMBERS LIKELY TO BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE CONFLICT.

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

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INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

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AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 LA PAZ 0087

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMAN

4. WE HERE BELIEVE THAT THE US SHOULD UPDATE ITS CONTINGENCY PLAN ON WHAT ACTION IT WOULD TAKE WERE WAR TO BREAK OUT ON THE PACIFIC COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA. MUCH OF WHAT WE DO NOW TO HEAD OFF A FUTURE CONFLICT IS CONTINGENT UPON WHAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO DO IF WAR ACTUALLY BROKE OUT. WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD DEVELOP RATHER CLEAR MULTILATERAL POLICIES IN THE AREAS OF CONCERN, ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT A POSSIBLE ACTIVE ROLE OF THE US IN RELATION TO BOLIVIA'S INITIATIVE FOR AN ACCESS TO THE SEA. WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT ARMS LIMITATIONS BUT ONLY IN THE LIGHT THAT PERU'S IMBALANCE IS SO ENORMOUS THAT IT WOULD MAKE LITTLE SENSE TO SEEK TO BRAKE ADDITIONAL PURCHASES BY A COUNTRY SUCH AS BOLIVIA. WE SHOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO ANSWER THE QUESTION AS TO WHETHER PERU HAS DIVERTED RESOURCES AWAY FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO THE ACQUISITION OF RATHER SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT AND THUS SHOULD HAVE TO PAY SOME PENALTY FOR THIS ACTION WHICH
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HAS PROVOKED NERVOUSNESS ON THE PART OF ITS NEIGHBORS.

5. I PERSONALLY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE US CAN ORGANIZE ARMS SUPPLIERS IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY WOULD LIMIT THEIR SALES TO LATIN AMERICA, BUT I WONDER IF WE COULD INTRADUCE LATIN AMERICA

INTO THE SCOPE OF DETENTE WITH THE USSR SO THAT WE COULD TELL THE SOVIETS THAT PART OF THE RESTRAINT WE EXPECT FROM THEM WOULD INCLUDE STOPPING OR LIMITING SALES OF WAR MATERIEL TO LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

6. I AM LEFT, HOWEVER, WITH THE VIEW THAT WHETHER OR NOT WE NOW BELIEVE THAT PERU IS CONTEMPLATING AN EARLY MILITARY ADVENTURE AGAINST CHILE OR ECUADOR, AMBASSADOR VAKY WAS ON THE RIGHT TRACK WHEN HE PROPOSED A PRIVATE US DISCUSSION WITH HIGH PERUVIAN AUTHORITIES ABOUT THEIR MILITARY PURCHASES AND AND INTENTIONS. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT AT A HIGH LEVEL WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT, THE PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO IS SEEMINGLY WELL WIRE-IN IN LIMA, SHOULD BE ACQUAINTED WITH THE CONCERNS THAT HAVE BEEN RAISED AND THAT HAVE REACHED US ABOUT PERU, ITS MILITARY BUILD-UP, AND ITS INTENTIONS. SIMILARLY, WERE PERUVIAN GENERAL RICHTER TO VISIT WASHINGTON, WE SHOULD DISCUSS THE PROBLEM IN CLEAR TERMS. PERHAPS WE CANNOT STOP ANY FURTHER PERUVIAN ARMS ACQUISITIONS, BUT WE SHOULD CERTAINLY MAKE CLEAN THE POSITION OF THE US TOWARD FURTHER UNSETTLING ACTIVITIES ON THE MILITARY FRONT ON THE WEST COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE WITHIN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PERUVIANS TO SUGGEST THAT ONE WAY TO ALLEVIATE TENSIONS IN THE AREA WOULD BE TO ACCEDE TO AN EARLY VISIT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAS IN HIS ROLE AS PEACEMAKER AND TO PERMIT HIM TO HAVE FREEDOM IN INVESTIGATING, INCLUDING ASCERTAINING TROOP MOVEMENTS.

7. IT IS MY HOPE THAT WE CAN DO SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE IN THE NEAR TERM WHICH CAN BE COMMUNICATED TO THE BOLIVIANS TO SHOW OUR ACTIVE CONCERN. THIS MIGHT HELP PRESIDENT BANZER BY

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REDUCING THE PRESSURES FOR ADDITIONAL BOLIVIAN ARMS PURCHASES. AT THIS MOMENT, THE BOLIVIAN PERCEPTION IS THAT WE EITHER DO NOT CARE ABOUT THE PERUVIAN BUILD-UP OR, WHAT IS WORSE, THAT WE WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN IT. MAY I REPEAT AMBASSADOR BLOOMFIELD'S OBSERVATION THAT IT IS NOT THE LOGIC OF THESE VIEWS THAT MATTERS AS MUCH AS THE FACT THAT THEY ARE SERIOUSLY HELD BY PARTICIPANTS IN THE SOUTHERN CONE DRAMA. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IT IS TIME FOR THE US TO ACT IN SOME WAY, IF ONLY TO STIMULATE THE OAS, SO THAT THE COUNTRIES IN THE SOUTHERN CONE PERCEIVE THAT WE ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ARMS BUILD-UP, THAT WE WISH TO SEE A HALT TO IT, THAT WE DO NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE OURSELVES IN IT, THAT WHILE WE DO NOT THINK THAT THE COUNTRIES NOW HAVE INTENTIONS TO GO TO WAR, THAT THERE IS A HIGH RISK, AND FURTHERMORE, THAT WE WILL ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE WITH THE OAS BEFORE CONFLICT BREAKS OUT AND WILL WORK ACTIVELY WITHIN THE REGIONAL BODY IN THE EVENT THAT IT DOES.

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